

View from the top: Professional development session details intellectual property issues

John Moore and Paul Parker - partners at the law firm of Bowles Rice, McDavid, Graff and Love - spoke to the PRSA-West Virginia Chapter about intellectual property issues that are likely to affect public relations professionals at the April professional development session.

Categories of intellectual property include patents, copyrights, trademarks and trade secrets, said Parker. Generally, patents serve to exclude others from making use of an invention and the protection is in force for 20 years from the date of application. Copyrights give the holder exclusive rights to creative works, whether published or not. Trademarks are symbols that identify goods or services. The test for trademark infringement is whether the average person would be confused by a competing mark.

One important factor concerning trade secrets is that they must remain confidential. Companies should be extremely careful how they handle their trade secrets. For example, publishing them on the

corporate intranet, or releasing them to persons outside the company may erode their legal protection.

Another concern of particular interest to the public relations profession relates to creative concepts presented by outside vendors. Parker noted a case where a vendor pitched a “Psycho Chihuahua” project to Taco Bell. The restaurant chain passed on hiring the vendor, but later used a now-famous Chihuahua in numerous advertisements. In the ensuing battle, the court found that the vendor performed a service that Taco Bell used to unjustly enrich

itself. The court awarded the vendor \$42 million in damages and interest.



Predictably, the two highly recommended photo releases whenever possible and to carefully check copyright information on any stock materials used. They also recommended that practitioners insist on a written statement from stock material suppliers verifying their right to distribute intellectual property.

Remember: Check the chapter!

This is a reminder that PRSA is now collecting your national and West Virginia chapter dues for 2009. Dues statements are sent prior to your anniversary date of joining PRSA.

In addition to confirming your contact information, please be sure to indicate that you want to be a member of the West Virginia Chapter. Dues for the chapter are \$50 a year and must be paid at the time you renew your national dues.

Dues income is critical to our budget, so please “check the chapter” when you pay dues.

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Chapter News

Awards, student mixers top current news

Awards Committee

Members of the West Virginia Chapter have been busy submitting Crystal Award entries and judging award entries for the Cincinnati and Central California Chapters, under the leadership of Awards Committee Chair Kyra Richards.

Members submitted over 50 award entries for the Crystal Awards competition in project and campaign categories. Entries were received from agencies, corporations, government entities, nonprofit organizations and students. These will be judged by the Cincinnati Chapter, with awards presented on June 17 at the Crystal Awards Gala at the Charleston Civic Center.

Chapter members judged awards for the Cincinnati Chapter in a reciprocal arrangement for our Crystal Awards judging. The Central California Chapter judged the East Central District Diamond Awards on our behalf last year, so we judged their chapter award entries this year.

We'd like to thank BrickStreet Insurance for hosting the judging sessions. We'd also like to thank the following chapter members and other who served as judges: Bryna Butler, APR, Buddy Davidson, Lesli Forbes, Tee Ford-Ahmed, Ph.D., Tammy

Harper; George Manahan, Jeri Matheney, APR, Kelly Merritt, Kyra Richards, Emily Seuffer, Diane Slaughter, CAE, APR, and John Womack.

Student mixers set

Professionals and students from our various PRSSA chapters will be getting together in the next month at two "speed dating" mixers.

PRSA-WV Chapter President-elect George Manahan, Student Liaison Committee Chair Sarah Payne-Scarbro and Past President Bill Bissett hosted a session from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. on Wed., April 29, in Room 2W22 at the Memorial Student Center on the campus of Marshall University. They were joined by PRSSA Chapter members Jodee Hammond, Kacie Chambers, Elizabeth Stewart, Tiffany Bajus, and Angela Sundstrom. Bissett said, "It was a most productive exchange for all of us!"

Join us for a PRSA/PRSSA mixer from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, at Capitol Roasters on the corner of Quarrier and Summers Streets in Charleston. We are hoping a number of our professionals from agencies, corporations, education, government and nonprofits will participate with students from West Virginia State University and West

Virginia University. As we have done in the past, each professional will host a table, with students visiting the various tables for five to ten minutes at a time. Students will be able to ask questions about skills and job duties so they can begin to plan for careers after college. Light refreshments will be provided. Please visit www.prsawv.org to register for this event.

We look forward to a great turnout of professionals and students for each of these events!

PRSA-WV Chapter member benefits

- Accreditation support
- *Chapter & Verse*
- Code of Ethics
- Committee service
- Leadership opportunities
- Membership directory
- Monthly programs
- Networking opportunities
- Professional development
- Skills development
- Volunteer opportunities
- Web site

Members

WV Chapter welcomes members

Please join the Board of Directors in welcoming the following new members to the West Virginia Chapter:

Janet L. Fisher

Deputy Commissioner
WV Dept of Agriculture
1900 Kanawha Blvd., East
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-3200
jfisher@ag.state.wv.us

Megan Elkins Hannah

Account Manager
Rainmaker Media Group
One Union Square, Ste 202
Charleston, WV 25302
(304) 414-3371
megan@thinkrainmaker.com

Lalena Price

Comm. Coordinator
Marshall University
100 Angus E. Peyton Drive
So. Charleston, WV 25303
(304) 746-1989
pricel@marshall.edu

Amanda J. Ramey

Bus Devel & Commun
Jackson Kelly PLLC
PO Box 553
Charleston, WV 25322
(304) 340-1143
ajramey@jacksonkelly.com

Encourage a new member to join PRSA and the West Virginia Chapter! To join, click the PRSA membership promotion graphic on www.prsawv.org.

Meeting Notice

View from the top: Charleston CVB

Patty Pitrolo, Interim President and CEO of the Charleston Convention and Visitors' Bureau (CVB), will share how the city and CVB are selling Charleston as a great destination for meetings and conventions.



As the economy worsens, price has become the top issue for meeting planners. This allows the city to compete for conferences that have previously been unreachable. She will highlight the city's "Bring it Home" campaign, which encourages residents to help the city bring home conventions and meetings that the resident is involved in. Charleston has a number of big events this summer, including the city's largest convention ever.

The Marriott Town Center Hotel will be the site for this luncheon meeting on Wednesday, May 20, at 12:00 noon. The board of directors will meet at 11:00 a.m. Reservations are required for this meeting by Friday, May 15. The cost for the meeting is \$17 for students and members and \$22 for guests. Please add \$5 per person for walk-ins or if we must bill you. Cancellations will be billed.

.....
 Yes, I will attend the May luncheon meeting Wednesday, May 20.

Name _____

Company _____

Email _____

Guest _____

Company _____

Check enclosed for \$17 per student/member and \$22 per guest (\$_____)

Reservations are required for this meeting and must be received by Friday, May 15.

Make check payable and mail with reservation form to:

PRSA-WV Chapter
PO Box 13604
Charleston, WV 25360-0604



President's Corner

I'd like to thank all the members who have graciously given of their time to judge award entries from Cincinnati and California. As I noted last month, this is a great means of professional development, and a great benefit to our chapter.

It seems as though folks in our profession are always the ones who never get a chance to ease up. While other divisions may see fluctuations in "crunch times," those in the PR department run at full throttle year-round, supporting first one division or client, then the next - all the while facing the time of the next media crisis.

While some "manage," we

"do." We're the ones who put in the grunt work and take care of the small details. Our duties might run from crafting a letter to a single unhappy individual, to developing organizational strategic plans, to being the company's public face. Whatever needs to be done, "we're on it."

Suffice it to say that ours is a profession of get-it-done types whose expertise, hard work and dedication to the greater good seldom receive the recognition due because, frankly, we've built an expectation of delivering the goods while shifting the credit elsewhere. Those who fail to recognize the importance of PR

professionals do so through their own short-sightedness and at their own risk.

So again, my sincere thanks to those of you who have generously given your valuable time in service of our chapter. By doing so, you have helped EVERY practitioner by building the image and stature of our profession.

Please make plans to help the next generation of practitioners by attending one of two upcoming PRSA-PRSSA mixers. Details are in the newsletter and on the web page.

PRSA-WV Chapter
PO Box 13604
Charleston, WV 25360



May 20

View from the top:

Selling Charleston

Patty Ptirolo

Charleston CVB

Marriott Town Center Hotel

12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m.

Board Meeting

11:00 a.m.

June 17

Crystal Awards Gala

Charleston Civic Center

5:30 p.m.